

stamped out by the death of Wishart and the exile of his active supporters. Acts of Privy Council, Provincial Synods, and Parliament alike bear renewed testimony to the spread of the religious" contagion. In spite of this outcry, however, there was a lull in the persecution, and from 1546 to 1559 only two heretics seem to have been burned. Political expediency as well as their increasing numbers contributed to shield the sectaries from the clamour raised against them in Parliament and synod. Archbishop Hamilton, Beaton's successor and half-brother of Arran, was no friend of heretics, but he was an interested partisan of the aggrandisement of the house of Hamilton, and could not afford to alienate from the regent the goodwill of the men favourable to reform. Mary of Lorraine found it equally necessary to make herself popular in her efforts, firstly, to obtain Arran's place, and secondly, to cement the alliance with France. She accordingly put a bridle on her bigotry both as candidate for and possessor of the regency. Moreover, the reform party received a considerable accession of strength in the fugitives who sought in Scotland a refuge from the Marian persecution, and who boldly preached to increasing multitudes, in spite of the citations of the ecclesiastical authorities. When thus challenged, they came with such a guard of resolute partisans that the bishops were fain to waive proceedings against them. It was the old Church rather than the new that was on its trial throughout these years of enforced truce. The spasmodic efforts in Parliament and synod to reform some of the more glaring abuses, against which the reformers inveighed, show that the ecclesiastical authorities felt that it was high time to attempt something more efficacious in the way of reform than merely burning heretics. One of these tardy attempts, which produced Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism, throws a strange light on the crass ignorance of the priesthood. It would be easy to prove from the official deliverances of both Parliament and ecclesiastical council the widespread existence of other grave evils—of rampant profligacy, idleness, greed, simony. The Church, in fact, at this critical period stood self-condemned in the eye of the nation. The notorious corruption was no exaggeration or invention of men like Knox, who saw in the Church only the abomination of Antichrist, and denied it, root and branch, any